

Arlington Redevelopment Board
November 3, 2014 Minutes
Town Hall Annex, Second Floor Conference Room, Town Hall – 7:00pm

Approved: November 17, 2014

PRESENT: Christine Scypinski, Chair, Andrew Bunnell, Mike Cayer, Bruce Fitzsimmons, Andy West

ABSENT:

STAFF: Carol Kowalski

Documents Used:

Director's Report, dated November 3, 2014

Letter from Mary Winstanley O'Connor to Ms. Scypinski, dated October 30, 2014

HCA EDR Application dated September 25, 2014

Plan set "Proposed Building Renovations, Kimball Farmer House", dated September 25, 2014

Letter from Mark O'Connor, O'Connor Architecture, dated October 8, 2014

Email between Gettect and O'Connor Architecture

Plan Sheet A300

The Chairman opened the meeting at 7:00pm and turned to the first agenda item of 1173 Mass. Ave. Mary Winstanley O'Connor, of Krattenmaker, O'Connor and Ingber, Pamela Hallett of Housing Corporation of Arlington, and Andrew Cannata, architect, introduced themselves to the Board.

Ms. O'Connor explained that she was working pro-bono for the Housing Corporation of Arlington. She corrected one error in her memo, stating there are two one-bedroom units and one two-bedroom unit.

Mr. Cannata introduced the history of the house. He explained that the historic material can be retained because they are installing an overhead fire sprinkler. He said they will be replacing all the metal doors with wooden doors, and that wooden sashes will replace the one-over-one plastic windows. He stated that the rooms are almost museum pieces and that the interior doors are beautiful and will be maintained.

Ms. O'Connor turned to the issue of parking. There are three spaces currently, and she suggested that the Board can reduce parking under Section 8.12 and Section 11.8. Five were required before and only three were provided. She stated that the three spaces were grandfathered.

Mr. Fitzsimmons said there are now three spaces, where six are required. Mr. Fitzsimmons asked if there was anything in the bylaw that declared aggregating the reductions onto the grandfathering. Mr. Fitzsimmons stated the Board would have to find that there is no change in use; however the space was mixed use and now is being changed to affordable housing. Mr. Fitzsimmons said he doesn't see how the Board could push the bylaw.

Ms. O'Connor said there was nothing that precludes this interpretation. Mr. Fitzsimmons noted that.

Mr. Fitzsimmons asked to correct the application regarding four parking spaces. He also added that the LEED checklist needs to be added.

The Board confirmed that the architect could submit this even if he wasn't certified.

Ms. Hallett added that HCA will be replacing the chain link fence on the property line with a six foot privacy fence, and a picket fence will be added. She also stated that the end walls will be stripped of paint from the brick walls.

Mr. West asked for architectural detail.

Mr. Cayer asked for confirmation that one space per lease is the requirement for parking.

Mr. West asked for confirmation that all units will be affordable.

Ms. Hallett confirmed that all units will be affordable for 99 years, there will be an Arlington preference, and the units' occupancy will be determined by a lottery.

Ms. Scypinski commented that the vegetation along the fence in the driveway gives a visual separation between the driveway at 1173 Mass. Ave., and the adjacent parking lot. She added that all healthy trees should be retained where possible. Ms. Scypinski requested a plan showing the existing trees that are staying and those being removed.

Ms. Scypinski commented that the parking proposal made common sense. Ms. Hallett said they've never run into a problem with their tenants having more than one car.

Ms. O'Connor said the Board can make a condition of the decision to have only one parking space per unit.

Mr. Cayer stated that the parking proposal is a bit of a stretch, but he could be comfortable with the reductions and the grandfathering.

Mr. Fitzsimmons said that the parking is based on square footage, and for every 500 residential square feet, there should be two parking spaces. He said he loved the plan but the parking is an issue.

Ms. O'Connor said there is nothing in Section 8.12 that says you can't do it.

Mr. Fitzsimmons said the question is whether the Zoning Bylaw is enabling legislation or a restrictive bylaw.

Ms. O'Connor stated there is an encouragement in the bylaw for affordable housing, and that this is different than a private property owner coming in and asking for a three family house and parking relief.

Mr. Cayer added that a 40B development could come in and provide less parking than zoning requires.

Mr. Fitzsimmons said that, ironically, the additional parking space would go vacant.

Mr. West stated that there were so many benefits to the proposed plan since it is affordable housing and it's on the National Register; it is a jewel being brought back to the Town. He added that the Town is looking for diverse and accessible housing units.

Mr. Cayer noted that two larger units could ironically create a demand for more parking.

The Chairman opened the floor to public comment.

Chris Loreti, 56 Adams Street, asked if the building fronts on Mass. Ave. The Board responded that twelve feet of the parcel fronts on Mass. Ave.

Mr. Loreti asked how it could be considered a residential property in the Assessor's database when it shows no kitchen. Ms. Hallett responded that there were kitchens in the Forest Street units.

Mr. Ruderman of Alton Street asked if the Historical Commission reviewed these plans. The Board confirmed they had written a letter of support.

Bill Turville, of Academy Street, stated that he has a studio nearby and wanted to speak in support of

the HCA's plans. He has seen many changes in the property over time, and these plans are a big improvement. There are many precedents across the state of one parking space per unit, especially when there is bus transit nearby. There is no reason the Board needs to make this a precedent since it is historic and affordable housing.

Ann LeRoyer, 12 Pierce Street, stated that she lives across from the HCA property on Pierce Street and said HCA are good owners. She stated that while there is no parking on Forest Street, there is plenty on Mass. Ave. The residents going in and out just need to be really cognizant of traffic racing down the street. Ms. LeRoyer said she was very supportive of this project.

Mr. Cayer moved to approve the plan as shown with a reduction in required parking spaces granted under Section 8.12 and 11.08 to four required spaces which is fewer spaces than the previously required five spaces and, therefore the non-conformity has not increased for the grandfathered existing three parking spaces on the premises and therefore the three spaces are grandfathered for the premises. The applicant shall make it a condition that every lease shall state that no more than one parking space is allowed per unit. Also, all the general conditions and special conditions must be met, and all the conditions in the LEED checklist must be met. Also, a landscape plan must be provided with existing trees to be removed and retained. Lastly, a correction must be made to the existing conditions on the application in regards to the number of parking spaces from plus or minus four, to plus or minus three.

Mr. West seconded. All Board members voted in favor, with the exception of Mr. Fitzsimmons who opposed.

Ms. Scypinski opened the Environmental Design Review hearing for 319 Broadway. Attorney John Leone and Common Ground owner, Bob O'Guin, introduced themselves to the Board. Mr. Leone explained that a water pipe had to be hidden from view, so a different specification had to be used for the function room wall. Mr. Leone said the building inspector couldn't approve it because it's wasn't built to specification. Mr. Leone is asking that the new plan be approved in order to get the final certificate of occupancy. Common Ground currently has a temporary certificate of occupancy. As of now, the restaurant has removed the asbestos and added a firewall; they have added new plumbing, and a new fire alarm system that is registered online with the Arlington Fire Department.

Mr. Fitzsimmons stated that the sound transmission class isn't a measure of how loud something is, but how much mitigation there is from the wall.

Mr. Cayer said that when the Board gets a plan, they trust that people are building them according to plan. He asked if there is another measure besides STC.

Mr. Fitzsimmons added that STC, by itself, isn't always a good measure, and it is not good for bass or low frequency.

The Chairman opened the floor to public comment.

Ms. Ruderman, of Alton Street, said his house faces the alleyway by Common Ground. He asked what it would cost to take it all out and rebuild it as specified. Mr. Ruderman distributed photos of delivery trucks in a no parking zone. He mentioned they are noisy and there is a 3:15am trash pickup every night. Mr. Ruderman asked who he was supposed to call at 3:15am, when Northwest Cartage is carting the trash down the alleyway.

Mr. O'Guin asked if she talked to Fusion Taste about the trash removal.

Ms. Ruderman said it has gotten worse since Common Ground has come into the location, and it is more frequent. Ms. Ruderman asked where the accountability is with an issue like this.

Isabelle Bettencart, of Belton Street, said she was very concerned with the noise. She also asked

about the trucks, and mentioned they cannot fit down the alleyway in the snow. She stated that their tries would be on the sidewalk. She reiterated that these issues have gotten worse with the addition of Common Ground.

Bob Mirak, managing partner of Legacy Partners, asked what would be involved in going back to the original specifications.

Mr. O'Guin said the insulation used is more energy efficient, and the cost to remove the current insulation would be about \$25,000 and the piping would be exposed. He said he would have to rip it out and leave it empty because of all the extra costs of hidden flaws with the building.

Mr. Mirak asked if there could be a stipulation that if the noise is excessive, the Board could impose controls and governors on the sound system.

Mr. West said it could be tested, and an alteration could be a potential remedy if the noise levels are exceeded.

Mr. Cayer stated that what is before the Board is that the change has the same scientific value as what was offered by the application.

Mr. Fitzsimmons argued that these plans get the same results, and it will be monitored, but added that this should have been brought to the Board as soon as the plans had been changed. Mr. Fitzsimmons moved to approve the substituted revised insulation as shown on the plans date stamped October 29, 2014 by the Planning and Community Development Department.

Mr. West seconded. All voted in favor.

The Board turned to the meeting minutes of October 20, 2014.

Mr. Fitzsimmons moved to approve the minutes as amended. Mr. Bunnell seconded. All voted in favor.

Mr. West moved to adjourn. All voted in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 8:50pm.